

PARISH OF HUMBIE.

PRESBYTERY OF HADDINGTON, SYNOD OF LOTHIAN AND
TWEEDDALE.

THE REV. JAMES MACFARLANE, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THIS parish was formed soon after the Reformation by the junction of the parishes of Keith and Humbie. In the end of the seventeenth century, the parish of Keith was called Keith-Symmars; and that of Humbie, Keith-Hundeley. The origin of the name Humbie, which they bear since their annexation, is unknown.

Extent, Boundaries.—This parish is partly intersected, towards the S. W. extremity, by the parish of Fala. But supposing it continuous, it is an oblong of 6 miles in length, from north to south, and 5 in breadth,—containing 19,200 imperial acres. It is bounded on the east by the parishes of Bolton and Salton; on the north by Pencaitland; on the N. W. by Ormiston and Cranston; on the west and south-west by Crichton and Fala; and on the south by the range of the Lammermoor-hills.

Topographical Appearances.—These hills vary in their form, soil, and elevation. Some of them are almost entirely covered with short heath; others are green, but interspersed with mossy bogs,—some of which have been lately dried by open surface draining, to improve the sheep pasture. Lammerlaw, which is the highest peak of the whole ridge, may be reckoned 1200 feet above the level of the sea. In other parts, the height of the summit above the level of the sea is from 800 to 1000 feet. The lower end of the parish is 350 feet above the sea level, and the base of the Lammermoors 600,—thus producing an elevation of 250 feet across the arable ground of the parish. In the higher parts of the parish the air is sharp and cold; but in the lower, it is more temperate. The climate is peculiarly healthful. In the centre and northern parts of the parish, less rain falls than at Edinburgh,—the pluvial clouds

being attracted on the one side by the mountainous range of Lammermoor, and on the other by the Frith of Forth.

Hydrography.—There are three brooks in the parish, each having a stone bridge of one arch. All of them issue from the hills above named, at a little distance from each other; and on reaching the valley, they take an easterly course,—when Keith and Humbie streams meet a little below the church: and nearly two miles below, they are joined by Birns-water, which from its source forms the eastern boundary of the parish. There is abundance of trout in these rivulets, some of which are of good flavour. The rivulets have a quantity and fall of water sufficient for machinery.

Mineralogy.—There seems to be abundance of iron ore in many places; and there are also some appearances of coal, but none has yet been wrought,—as the contiguous parishes abound in good coal, and also in limestone. The former is got for 9d. the load, the latter for 1s. 8d. per boll. The soil is very various; in some places, rich and loamy; in some, light and sandy; in others, clayey or mossy. Still, however, by skill and industry, it yields in general fair crops of turnip and every kind of grain.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Eminent Men.—Of the proprietors of Whitburgh, by far the most ancient family now resident in the parish, several were distinguished for personal strength and courage, as well as for their liberality of disposition. Sir Adam Hepburn, a Senator of the College of Justice, early in the seventeenth century, was highly esteemed for his patriotic spirit and generous beneficence to the parish. He built at his own expense the first bridge on Humbie-water, which still bears his name, and the date of 1645. He also gave in donation to the heritors to serve for a manse,—a house, which then stood close to the church, with about three Scotch acres of haugh and bank. Hugh Scott of Harden, a gentleman of extensive property and baronial hospitality, lately succeeded to the Hepburns of Humbie.

Land-owners.—The chief land-owners are, the Earl of Hopetoun; Sir Neil Menzies, Bart.; Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden; and Andrew Fletcher, Esq. of Saltoun.

Parochial Registers.—In former times, the parochial registers were very ill kept,—some of them having been entirely lost or destroyed; they do not reach further back than 100 years.

Mansion-Houses.—Of modern buildings, the mansion of Mr Anderson of Whitburgh is the best. It was built twenty-four years ago. Keith-house, one of the seats of the Earl Marshal, may be mentioned on account of what it once was,—having been a large and elegant building, according to the taste of the times, and suited to the splendour of a family then the most opulent and powerful in the kingdom. The timber with which it was built was a present from the King of Denmark, as a testimony of the high opinion which he had formed of the Earl when employed to treat concerning the marriage of the Princess Anne of Denmark with James VI.

The ruins of a Roman Catholic chapel still remain in front of Keith House, with a cemetery attached to it, which is still used by some of the parishioners. Mr John Keynart, minister of Duffus, was vicar of Keith in the year 1595, when he sold the living, which afforded twelve chalders of victual, and three husbands of land, for a mere trifle, to the Earl Marshal. All succeeding proprietors have kept possession of the lands.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of the parish must once have been greater than at present, as some vestiges of several small villages may still be traced.

Population in 1801,	-	-	-	785
1811,	-	-	-	837
1821,	-	-	-	837
1831,	-	-	-	875

The average number of births for the last seven years is 15, of deaths 9, of marriages 7.

There are 10 landed proprietors in the parish; but only two of them are at present resident. Their yearly rentals vary from L. 300 to L. 1500 Sterling respectively.

There are 7 bachelors and 6 widowers, all upwards of fifty years of age; and both taken together just equal the number of unmarried women above forty-five.

Number of families in the parish,	-	-	-	-	-	190
chiefly employed in agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	123
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	-	-	-	21

It is a melancholy fact, that there are 8 insane persons in one family, and one in each of two others; but all of them are harmless and inoffensive. The parents of these individuals are correct in their conduct and industrious, though they discover such a degree of mental imbecility as might indicate that the malady is hereditary.

IV—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—About 7000 acres are in a regular course of cultivation, and nearly 200 more might be cultivated along the face, and towards the base, of the Lammermoors; but, owing both to the high climate and the difficulty of getting manure, these lands are very seldom ploughed; and even when ploughed, it is chiefly for the sake of renovating the grass. There are in the parish about 2400 acres of hill and moor land.

Humbie wood consists of 400 imperial acres of oak and birch with some beech and firs; and being contiguous to Salton wood, it presents a range of beautiful and extensive scenery to the traveller from the top of Soultra-hill. Plantations, belts, and clumps on other estates extend to 100 acres more.

Rent of Land.—The rent of arable land varies from L. 2, 5s. to 14s. per acre, which may make the average L. 1, 5s. The rate of grazing has greatly fallen of late years; but hinds' cows are still rated at L. 5 for summer's grass and straw during winter. These are almost the only animals grazed at a fixed price per head, as farmers who have not sufficient pasture of their own take grass parks for the season. These are now let at from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3; some years ago they brought from L. 4 to L. 5 per acre. This may be the reason for valuing the grazing of cattle breeding to be fed off on turnip, according to their different ages and weight, at the low rate of from L. 2 to L. 3 per head. On clover or good old natural grass, the grazing of a sheep is worth from 12s. to 16s., estimating its size and quality.

Live-Stock.—Great attention has been given to the rearing of sheep, and improving their breed; and the success has been proportional. The black-faced seem to be in less repute, and the Cheviot, or a mixed breed between them and the Leicester, is preferred. Much improvement has also been made in the breed of cattle as well as in feeding them for the market.

Husbandry.—At present, rape-dust is much used for raising wheat, and bones for raising turnip, where there is a scarcity of dung. But perhaps the greatest and most effectual improvement in husbandry has been the practice lately introduced of grazing the farm, in regular rotation, for two or three years.

This county still retains its high reputation for agriculture; but the farming capital is greatly diminished within the last ten years. Farm-houses and steadings are generally substantial and on a liberal scale. Great attention is bestowed on fences both by proprie-

tors and tenants. Hedges are raised at a great expense where the soil is unfavourable to them.

Produce.—The following statement gives a fair average of the raw produce of the parish in ordinary years. The prices may be too high for the present year, but the unusually abundant crop will yield an equivalent.

1850 quarters wheat at 54s. per quarter, - - -	L. 4590	0	0
1667 do. barley at 32s. do., - - - - -	2665	12	0
4869 do. oats at 24s. do., - - - - -	5876	8	0
357 do. pease at 32s. do., - - - - -	571	4	0
3110 bolls potatoes at 7s. per boll, - - - - -	1088	10	0
286 acres turnip at L. 6 per acre, - - - - -	1716	0	0
23120 stones of hay at 8d. per stone, - - - - -	770	13	4
3044 sheep at 10s. each, - - - - -	1522	0	0
Cows and cattle at L. 3, per head, - - - - -	1077	0	0
Gardens, - - - - -	60	0	0
Annual thinning and periodical felling of woods, &c.	300	0	0
Total value of yearly raw produce,	L. 20257	7	4

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Markets.—The two greatest grain markets in Scotland, Haddington and Dalkeith, are nearly equidistant, each being about nine miles from the centre of the parish.

Means of communication.—The cross roads to the latter town are heavy, having several steep ascents and declivities, till they reach the great line of road to England by Blackhills. These roads are kept in a tolerable state of repair, by statute labour; but it is contemplated to put a toll-bar on the principal one, when it will be partly altered, and otherwise much improved.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church is in the very centre of the parish, (exclusive of the intersected part :) it is neat and substantial. It was built in 1800, and contains about 400 sittings, all of them free. The manse was built forty-seven years ago, and was then reckoned of the ordinary size; but in 1822 it received a considerable addition. The glebe is small but of good soil. The stipend being all in grain varies from L. 250 to L. 300, according to the rate of the fiars. The church is well and regularly attended. The number of communicants is from 280 to 300. There are two Episcopalian families in the parish; and the number of Dissenting families is 15.

Education.—There are two parochial schools in the parish, and both teachers are well qualified for their office. They have the legal salary and accommodations; but the school fees are small,—those of the one teacher being about L. 10 a year,—of the other, about L. 12.

Except in the extremities of the parish, which are near some neighbouring school, there are no individuals in the parish residing at an inconvenient distance from one or other of the above schools. In such circumstances, there is not one of the young capable of receiving instruction that cannot read; and generally they are taught to write and count with a considerable degree of readiness and accuracy. Some are taught gratis, or paid for from the poor funds.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The poor funds arise from assessments, collections, and interest, &c. The lying money amounts to L. 360 Sterling. The yearly amount of church collections is small,—the non-residence of the heritors, and the practice of legal assessment being unfavourable to that kind of charity. The amount of assessment is from L. 60 to L. 100 per annum; but on any pressing occasions, it is considerably more. The present number of paupers on the roll is 18, and the allowance given them varies from 6s. to 10s. each monthly,—besides occasional aid given to industrious families in distress. As might be expected from the rural simplicity and distance of the people from scenes of dissipation, (there being only one alehouse in the parish,)—they are sober and industrious, but perhaps less provident than in former times, and therefore soon brought to poverty when age or distress comes upon them. When thus pressed, they shew little reluctance to apply for parochial relief.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Forty years ago, the real rental of the parish was L. 2700. It is now upwards of L. 6300. The increase of produce with that of prices, also, till of late years, has been nearly proportional. But this great increase of product is not owing so much to more land being in tillage as to the superior and more expensive mode of cultivation. Since the above period, the number of cattle and sheep fattened for the market has been more than doubled. These are not entirely fed on farm produce, but partly on draff, dreg, and oil-cake. But the present aspect of things is too likely to give a check to every expensive improvement.

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